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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/561,834	12/22/2005	Shigeru Nakano	1254-0301PUS1	2986
2292	7590	05/17/2007		
BIRCH STEWART KOLASCH & BIRCH			EXAMINER	
PO BOX 747			MITRA, RITA	
FALLS CHURCH, VA 22040-0747			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			1656	
			NOTIFICATION DATE	DELIVERY MODE
			05/17/2007	ELECTRONIC

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

mailto:mailroom@bskb.com

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	10/561,834	SHIGERU NAKANO
	Examiner	Art Unit
	Rita Mitra	1656

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 1 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 11/9/06.
 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-9 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
 6) Claim(s) _____ is/are rejected.
 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
 8) Claim(s) 1-9 are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____. | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____. |

DETAILED ACTION

Applicants' Preliminary Amendment filed on June 2, 2006 is acknowledged. Amendment to the specification is noted. Claims 1-9 are under consideration.

Election/Restriction

Restriction is required under 35 U.S.C. 121 and 372.

This application contains the following inventions or groups of inventions, which are not so linked as to form a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1.

In accordance with 37 CFR 1.499, applicant is required, in response to this action, to elect a single invention to which the claims must be restricted.

I. Claim 1, drawn to a protein comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 2 and mutants thereof, wherein the protein is having growth promoting function.

II. Claims 2-7, drawn to a DNA which encodes a protein comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 2 or mutants thereof, wherein said DNA comprising a nucleotide sequence from nucleotide 180 to 1376 of sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1; a DNA capable of hybridizing to a DNA consisting of a sequence complementary to the nucleotide sequence from nucleotide 180 to 1376 of sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1 that encodes a protein having a growth promoting

function; a DNA capable of hybridizing to a DNA consisting of a sequence that is produced from a part of the nucleotide sequence from nucleotide 180 to 1376 of sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1 having a function as a primer or probe; a recombinant vector, a transformed host cell; a microorganism having an enhanced growth promoting function, wherein the number of copies of DNA of claim 2 is amplified within a cell, wherein said microorganism is an acetic acid bacterium belonging to the genus *Acetobacter* or genus *Gluconacetobacter*.

III. Claims 8 and 9, drawn to a method for producing vinegar by culturing the microorganism of claim 7.

The claims of these groups I-III are directed to different inventions, which are not linked to form a single general concept under PCT Rule 13.1, because, under PCT Rule 13.2 they lack the same or corresponding special technical features for the following reasons:

Applicants' invention, considered as a whole, lacks a special technical feature that defines a contribution over the prior art (see references Fukaya et al. J. of Bacteriology, Vol. 172, No. 4, April 1990 and JP 03-219878 in international search report of PCT/JP04/008797). These references describe cloning and characterization of acetic acid resistant gene in *Acetobacter* strains. The references also describe the mutants *Acetobacter aceti* No. 1023 and genes *aarA*, *aarB* and *aarC* responsible for expression of acetic acid resistance.

Because of unlimited substitution involved in deriving a mutant that has a growth promoting function was known at the time this application was filed, persons skilled in the art

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could easily isolate a protein of claim 1 of instant application. Accordingly, the claims are not so linked by a special technical feature within the meaning of PCT Rule 13.2 so as to form a single inventive concept and lack of unity is deemed proper.

The examiner has required restriction between product and process claims. Where applicant elects claims directed to the product, and a product claim is subsequently found allowable, withdrawn process claims that depend from or otherwise include all the limitations of the allowable product claim will be rejoined in accordance with the provisions of MPEP § 821.04. **Process claims that depend from or otherwise include all the limitations of the patentable product** will be entered as a matter of right if the amendment is presented prior to final rejection or allowance, whichever is earlier. Amendments submitted after final rejection are governed by 37 CFR 1.116; amendments submitted after allowance are governed by 37 CFR 1.312.

In the event of rejoinder, the requirement for restriction between the product claims and the rejoined process claims will be withdrawn, and the rejoined process claims will be fully examined for patentability in accordance with 37 CFR 1.104. Thus, to be allowable, the rejoined claims must meet all criteria for patentability including the requirements of 35 U.S.C. 101, 102, 103, and 112. Until an elected product claim is found allowable, an otherwise proper restriction requirement between product claims and process claims may be maintained. Withdrawn process claims that are not commensurate in scope with an allowed product claim will not be rejoined. See “Guidance on Treatment of Product and Process Claims in light of *In re Ochiai, In re Brouwer* and 35 U.S.C. § 103(b),” 1184 O.G. 86 (March 26, 1996). Additionally, in order to retain the right to rejoinder in accordance with the above policy, Applicant is advised that the

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process claims should be amended during prosecution either to maintain dependency on the product claims or to otherwise include the limitations of the product claims. **Failure to do so may result in a loss of the right to rejoinder.**

Further, note that the prohibition against double patenting rejections of 35 U.S.C. 121 does not apply where the restriction requirement is withdrawn by the examiner before the patent issues. See MPEP § 804.01.

Applicants are reminded that upon the cancellation of claims to a non-elected invention, the inventorship must be amended in compliance with 37 CFR 1.48(b) if one or more of the currently named inventors is no longer an inventor of at least one claim remaining in the application. Any amendment of inventorship must be accompanied by a diligently filed petition under 37 CFR 1.48(b) and by the fee required under 37 CFR 1.17(i).

Applicants are advised that the response to this requirement to be complete must include an election of the invention to be examined even though the requirement be traversed (37 CFR 1.143).

Inquiries

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Rita Mitra whose telephone number is 571-272-0954. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F, 10:00 am-7:00 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Dr. Kathleen K. Bragdon on 571-272-0931 The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



Rita Mitra, Ph.D.

April 30, 2007



KATHLEEN KERR BRAGDON, PH.D.
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER